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ABSTRACT

This manual is designed to aid administrators and other school personnel in assisting postsecondary students in overcoming some of the barriers that prevent them from completing vocational education programs. The manual, which consists of strategies for overcoming enrollment barriers that were identified in a 1982 survey of Florida students, teachers, counselors, and administrators, begins with a discussion of procedures for use in recognizing individual enrollment barriers, developing strategies for combatting them, formulating appropriate administrator strategies, and administering appropriate counselor and teacher actions. Set forth in the remainder of the guide are strategies for addressing the following barriers to the enrollment of postsecondary students in vocational training programs: need for student financial aid, conflict between school and work, inadequate transportation, need for guidance, failure to attend class regularly, the perception that courses are not of a desirable quality, failure on the part of students to accept responsibilities associated with the program, lack of student motivation, inadequate secondary education, the acceptance of jobs by students prior to program completion, easy frustration on the part of students accompanied by a fear that they will not do well, the temporary postponement by students of their plans to attend school, and the need for child care. A list of references concludes the manual. (MN)

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FINAL REPORT

A Guide to Retaining Postsecondary Students in Vocational Training Programs

A Product of
Project Number 4-2C31
From July 1, 1983 to August 31, 1984

Identification of Recruitment Barriers to Vocational Training Programs as Perceived by Students, Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators in Selected Florida Schools

Phase III

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A GUIDE TO RETAINING POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed to aid administrators and other school personnel in assisting postsecondary students in overcoming some of the barriers that prevent them from completing vocational education programs. The information in this manual was developed from a study titled "Identification of Recruitment Barriers to Vocational Training Programs as Perceived by Students, Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators in Selected Florida Schools" (Scanlon, Arrington, Cheek, and Beeman, 1982; Waltz, Arrington, Cheek, and Beeman, 1983, 1984). The central purpose of the overall study was to describe barriers to recruitment and retention of disadvantaged, unemployed, underemployed, and out-of-school youth and to develop a plan for implementing recruitment strategies to attract and retain students in postsecondary vocational programs.

This manual contains a model which presents a systematic scheme designed to assist in retaining students in vocational education porgrams. The model is designed so that each of the thirteen retention barriers (Waltz et al, 1983) can be inserted into the appropriate blocks of the model, thus developing a logical sequence for overcoming the barrier. A brief explanation of each of the thirteen barriers is presented followed by the recommended strategies for resolving each.

DIRECTIONS FOR USING THE MODEL

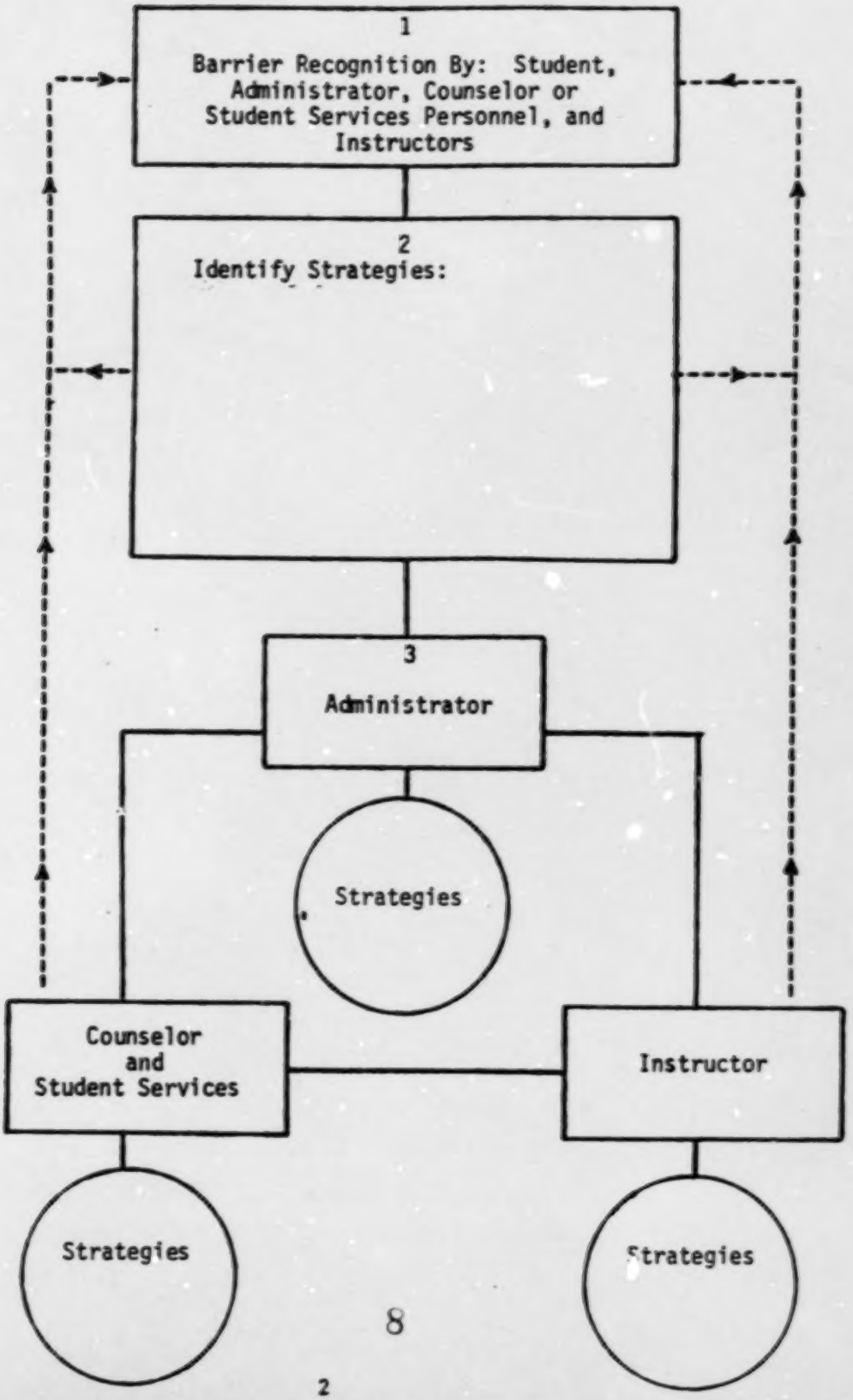
The thirteen barriers were synthesized from a list of forty-nine barriers identified by students, teachers, counselors, and administrators (Scanlon et al, 1982). The criteria used to select barriers to be included in the manual were: (1) each barrier must have been ranked in the top ten as to their importance by at least one of the four groups listed above, and (2) each barrier must have had the potential for being solved by school personnel. After combining several closely related barriers, thirteen met the criteria required to be included in this manual.

The strategies suggested were compiled after analyzing the results of a nationwide survey of vocational school administrators. Each recommended strategy has been successfully used.

To utilize this manual, an understanding of the model is necessary. Therefore, a discussion of the model follows.

The model shown on the next page (Figure 1) is a systematic scheme to use in overcoming barriers to student retention in postsecondary vocational education. The first block in the model depicts the barrier recognition phase in the process. Input at this point is from administrators, counselors, student services personnel, instructors, and students. The solid line joining the first and second blocks shows

Figure 1. Master Retention Model for Overcoming Barriers to Student Retention in Postsecondary Vocational Education Programs



the path to accomplishing the second step, that of identifying specific strategies for overcoming the identified barrier. During this phase the strategies are analyzed as to their appropriateness for overcoming the identified barrier. All possible alternatives are given consideration. The line connecting the second and third blocks depict the path to follow once alternative strategies have been selected. The administrator is kept informed and makes the decision as to who will implement the selected strategy or strategies. The first option presented to the administrator at this point is to act on the strategy which is depicted by the circle connected at the bottom of the administrator's block. The second option is for the administrator to delegate responsibility for implementing the strategy or strategies to counselors or student services personnel as shown by the solid line connecting the administrator's block and the counselor block. The third option is for the administrator to delegate the responsibility for implementing the strategy or strategies to the instructor as shown by the solid line connecting the administrator's block to the instructor block. The solid line connecting the counselor and student services personnel block with the instructor block depicts the line of communication and cooperation between the instructor and the counselor. The counselor and student services personnel or the instructor implement specific strategies at the direction of the administrator and this action is depicted by the solid line and circle at the bottom of the block. The dotted lines connecting all the blocks are the paths of feedback and evaluation. At any point on the model, a redefining of the barrier or a re-evaluation of the strategies may take place. An example model with a barrier and strategies identified is shown in Figure 2. Figure 2 also shows how the strategies may be delegated by the administrator by the letters representing the strategy from the preceding step.

Briefly the steps outlined below give the orderly procedure for using the model.

Step 1. Recognize and define the barrier

Step 2. Identify strategies and consider the alternatives

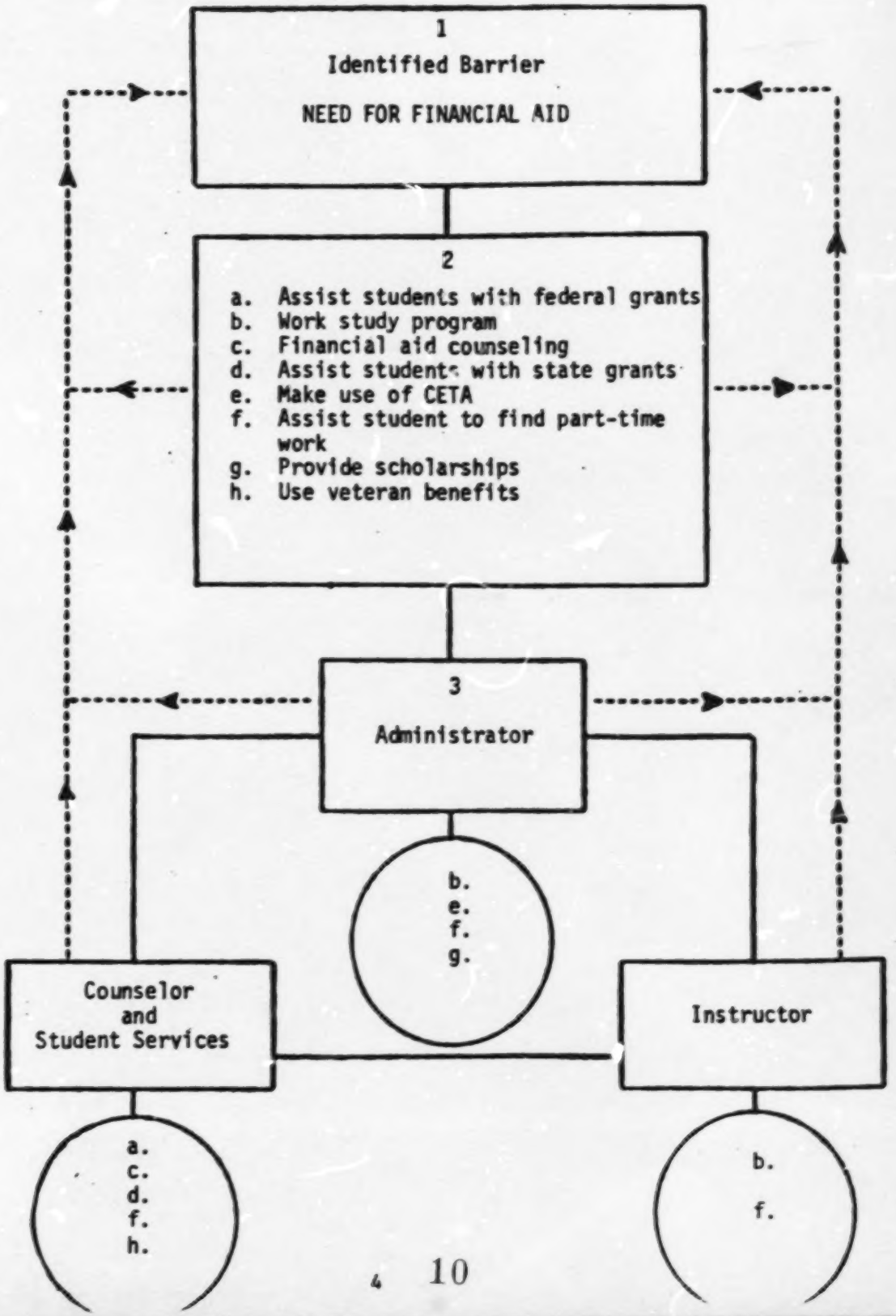
Step 3. Implement strategies by administrator or administrator's designee

Step 4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy or strategies

DIRECTIONS FOR USING THE MANUAL

Study the Directions for Using the Model, then identify the barrier that is causing the retention problem. Turn to the page where the barrier is discussed as indicated in the Table of Contents. Mentally or physically place the barrier in the top block of the model; then, read the suggested strategies for overcoming that barrier and place them in the second block. Analyze the strategies and determine

Figure 2. Example Retention Model for Overcoming Barriers to Student Retention in Postsecondary Vocational Education Programs



which one(s) is/are appropriate for your situation. Determine who can most effectively implement the strategy and assign the responsibility to a specific individual. If at any point in the process it is determined that the barrier was not properly identified, the broken lines in the model indicate the points of withdrawal and re-entry into the scheme.

BARRIER 1
NEED FOR STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Need for student financial aid is due to the fact that postsecondary students are often married and have families, have very little or no parental support, have committed themselves to financial obligations that consume most of their present income, and all the other commitments of young adults. Even though tuition is often free, the need to support themselves and their families makes attending school difficult. In a recent study of postsecondary students in Florida by Waltz, Arrington, Cheek, and Beeman (1984), 36 percent of the respondents indicated that the availability of financial aid had a moderate or strong influence upon their decision to enroll in a vocational education program. Based upon these facts, the following strategies are recommended:

1. Encourage students to apply for Federal Basic Educational Opportunity Grant(BEOG) Funds. Keep grant application forms available, and assist the students in applying for the grants. The forms needed include:

   a. Needs assessment forms such as College Scholarship Service Financial Aid Form (FAF),or the ACT Family Financial Statement.
   b. Institutional application forms such as Certification of Eligibility.
   c. Financial aid transcripts.
   d. Statement of Selective Service Registration compliance.

Make sure students are aware of deadlines for applying and have all forms filled out completely and correctly for applications to be considered.

2. Encourage the use of veteran educational benefits by eligible students. Assist them by providing the name and location of the service officer they need to contact to apply for their benefits. The veterans affairs counselor,the state employment office, and veterans' regional office have forms and information needed to apply for benefits. To receive educational benefits, the students must:

   a. Complete application, VA Form 22-1990.
   b. Establish a file (one time only) at the regional veterans office which includes a copy of their DD Form 214 (separation from active duty papers).
   c. Be admitted to an institution certified as acceptable by the Veteran's Administration.

d. Certify attendance to establish pay rate before benefits can be received.

3. Implement a work study program. Employ students as clerical assistants, laboratory assistants, maintenance assistants, couriers, or public relations assistants. A formal work study program is available through the Pell Grant system and applications may be made in the same manner as for other Federal Financial Aid. For additional information and forms write to: Federal Student Aid Programs, Department DEA-85, Pueblo, CO 81009, and ask for a copy of the Student Guide: "Five Federal Financial Aid Programs." The Veterans' Administration also offers work/study employment to qualified students. Secure information concerning these programs from the local Veterans Administration Office.

4. Provide financial aid counseling. Inform all students and potential students of the sources of financial aid, keep application forms available, and assist the students with filing the proper forms. Provide group counseling each semester for students and families through a mini-course on how to apply for financial aid.

Financial aid is available from the federal government through a wide range of programs. The programs include:

a. Pell Grants
b. Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG)
c. Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG)
d. College Work Study (CWS)
e. National Direct Student Loans (NDSL)
f. Guaranteed Student Loans (GSL)
g. Social Security Administration (SSA)
h. Veteran's Administration (VA)
i. State Vocational Student and Rehabilitation Programs

Information concerning these federal student aid programs can be obtained by writing to:

Federal Student Aid Programs
Department DEA-5
Pueblo, CO 81009

Students applying for financial aid must also file a complete and correct needs analysis report, Financial Aid Form (FAF). This form and an institutional application and certification of eligibility form must be marked before April 1 to:

Department of Education
Knott Building
Tallahassee, FL 32301

5. Make use of Job Partnership Training Act (JPTA) funds. The federal effort is designed to allow students to get job training and experiences through the cooperative efforts of public education and industry. JPTA replaces the CETA program. Economically disadvantaged youth and adults may receive training through classroom and work experience. Eligibility is based on income and family size. Application forms for this program can be obtained from the local Job Service Offices or through the school board office if the student still attends high school. Placement and training is based on the student's background, skills, and interest.

6. Assist students in finding part-time work. Keep up-to-date help wanted advertisements posted. Assist students in communicating with potential employers by helping arrange interviews. Counsel students on writing resumes, completing job application forms, and interviewing. A microcomputer software system that teaches the necessary employability and life skills called "TIPS" is available from The Center for Career Development Services, Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education, Knott Building, Tallahassee, FL 32301. The "TIPS" system contains a user orientation to the information presented in "TIPS" and how to use the microcomputer. The system also includes a presentation of each of the three major categories: finding a job and getting hired, developing good work habits and handling job changes and managing personal finances, human relations, and job effectiveness.Keep a current list of employers needing part-time help with detailed job descriptions. Students can also apply at the local Job Service Office.

7. Establish scholarships ranging from the cost of one semester of tuition to full expenses for the entire program. Scholarships can be established within the school system through the cooperation of the school board. For example, the school can grant a tuition scholarship and enroll a student. The enrollment generates FTE; therefore, the school receives state funding for the student. Business and industry who employ graduates from the school may sponsor scholarships. Other sources of funding can include civic organizations, advisory board members, alumni, and private donors.

BARRIER 2
CONFLICT BETWEEN SCHOOL AND WORK

Part-time jobs are often the means whereby students can get the financial support required in order to enroll or continue their enrollment in school. Conflicting schedules often restrict the amount of time a student can devote to school. Recent research by Waltz, Arrington, Cheek, and Beeman (1984), has shown that over 25 percent of the students currently enrolled indicated that a compatible part-time work schedule had a moderate or strong influence upon their initial enrollment and their continued enrollment. The following strategies are recommended to assist students in overcoming this barrier to vocational education.

1. Allow students to enroll part-time. Self paced, competency-based instructional programs which allow students to complete work at their own pace or irregularly enables students to keep part-time or in many cases full-time employment.

2. Offer courses at alternative times. Schedule courses to enable students to attend school prior to work or immediately after work. Also, night classes can provide some students the opportunity they need to attend school.

3. Provide flexible scheduling. A flexible schedule will enable students to enroll in just one class or several depending upon the students needs and time available. Flexible schedules may also include part-time enrollment and alternative times for classes.

4. Utilize funds available to employ students within the school system. This is usually on a limited basis but it may help the students who cannot resolve job conflicts.

BARRIER 3
INADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION

Most students attending vocational schools must commute. According to recent research (Waltz et al, 1984), more than one third of the students surveyed indicated that the school being located close to them or transportation being available and convenient, moderately or strongly influenced their decision to enroll in vocational education. The following strategies are recommended to assist students needing transportation.

1. Provide a school sponsored transportation system. Allow postsecondary students to ride state sponsored buses. Establish a special bus route for postsecondary students or employ postsecondary students as bus drivers.

2. Encourage use of the public bus system. This means of transportation is usually available only to those who live in or near an urban area. If routes do not include the vocational school vicinity, then work with officials in charge of public transportation and encourage them to schedule a route that would serve the school. Publicize the bus service and make bus schedules available to potential students.

3. Organize car pools. Provide a means for those interested in car pools to become organized. Keep a current list of those utilizing or seeking a car pool. Make a bulletin board display showing riders and drivers' routes on a map. Provide preferential parking spaces for car pools.

BARRIER 4
NEED FOR GUIDANCE

Choosing one's career is an important decision. Guidance personnel are often very helpful to students by making information available about career opportunities and educational requirements for specific occupations. The guidance counselor can give advice based on the student's ability in relation to the career choice and help match the student with appropriate career options. The guidance counselor can also provide students with financial aid information that is very useful to the student making decisions about vocational education. Over 30 percent of the students surveyed in a recent study by Waltz et al (1984), indicated that assistance from a guidance counselor had a moderate or strong influence on their decision to remain in a vocational education program. Listed below are recommended strategies for assisting students with this need.

1. Provide student services personnel. Employ additional counselors or assign assistant administrators counseling duties. Care must be taken that those assigned counseling duties are properly trained and have experience working with postsecondary students. The Department of Counselor Education and the Division of Continuing Education at the University of Florida offers a Professional Development Seminar series every year at several locations throughout the state. A booklet describing the seminars to be offered is available from: Division of Continuing Education, 1938 West University Avenue, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

2. Administer tests to identify interests and abilities. Fully utilize a variety of interest and aptitude tests to assist students in making a career choice. Standardized tests are available from the following organizations.

California Occupational Preference System (COPS)
EDITS/Educational and Industrial Testing Service
Rosedale Rd., Princeton, NJ 08541

Hall Occupational Orientation Inventory
Scholastic Testing Service, Inc.
480 Meyer Road, Bensonville, ILL 60106

The Harrington/O'Shea System for Career Decision-Making
Chronicle Guidance Publications, Inc.
Aurora St., Moravia, NY 13118

Individual Career Exploration (ICE)
Scholastic Testing Service
480 Meyer Road, Bensonville, ILL 60106

Kuder Preference Record (Vocational Form C)
Science Research Associates
1540 Page Mill Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94304

Ohio Vocational Interest Survey (OVIS)
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc./Test Department
757 3rd Avenue, New York, NY 10017

The Self Directed Search (SDS)
Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.
577 College Av., Palo Alto, CA 94306

Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory
National Computer Systems, Interpretive Scoring Systems
P.O. Box 1416, Minneapolis, MN 55440

Vocational Interest, Experience, and Skills Assessment (VIESA)
The American College Testing Program
P.O. Box 168, Iowa City, IA 52240

3. Publicize availability of counseling services. Inform students of counseling services available through daily announcements, bulletin board flyers, student newsletters, referrals by instructors, and in printed brochures promoting the school.

4. Provide a career assistance center. Utilize the media center or student lounge to make available information concerning career opportunities and job availability. Utilize the Florida Center for Career Development Services to keep current job listings available for students and encourage students to utilize the system as they feel necessary.

5. Assign instructors counseling responsibilities. Instructors have the most contact with students and usually know the students' interests and abilities. They know more about the students' programs and career fields than anyone; therefore, they can provide students the most accurate and up-to-date information and present a positive image for students.

BARRIER 5
FAILURE TO ATTEND CLASS REGULARLY

Student regard regular class attendance differently than teachers, counselors, and administrators. They atribute poor class attendance to such factors as personal and family commitments, illness, or part-time employment and feel they have no control over these kinds of situations. However, teachers, counselors, and administrators feel that poor class attendance is caused by lack of commitment to school by the students, and the attitude that school work can be made up or excused. To help students and faculty overcome barriers of class attendance the following strategies are recommended:

1. Get students involved in hands-on work quickly. This practice helps keep students from getting bored and losing interest in their program. It is easier for them to relate theory to job situation when they can experience real problems.

2. Utilize individualized, modularized, competency-based instruction. This method of instruction decreases the need for students to attend class regularly. This method of instruction allows more flexibility in attendance requirements and may encourage improved class attendance because it allows students to progress through their course of study at their own pace.

3. Establish rigid attendance requirements. Establish attendance policies and enforce them. However, attendance policies should allow for a reasonable number of class absences and an appeals system to cover extenuating circumstances.

4. Provide counseling. Students occasionally need to be reminded that their attendance is not meeting the minimum requirements that an instructor expects. Also, that the attendance requirements of the instructor closely parallel that of employers. Remind them that employees may get replaced for poor attendance or frequent tardiness. Letting the students know that someone is watching and cares may be the incentive they need.

5. Give reprimands. Selective use of reprimands is recommended because postsecondary students may feel they are being attacked; thus, creating tensions between the student and the school. Used incorrectly, reprimands may do more damage than good.

BARRIER 6
COURSES ARE NOT DEEMED TO BE OF DESIRABLE QUALITY

The characteristics of courses that cause students to feel the quality was inadequate were; material covered was not practical and applicable, course contained too much theory and not enough application, the material was too elementary, the skills taught were not what was being used in industry, and the instructors' inability to relate material to students. Counselors felt that some courses are taught on too advanced a level for certain students to understand; therefore, causing frustration and withdrawal from the program. Recent research by Waltz et al (1984), revealed that 23 percent of the students stated that quality of the program had a moderate influence and 57 percent stated it had a strong influence on their decision to continue in the program. To help improve the quality of the courses taught, the following strategies are recommended:

1. Utilize an advisory committee. The vocational school administrators, counselors, and instructors should help the advisory committee understand their role. Utilize the slide/tape program titled, "Making Good Programs Better." This program is available through the Florida State Advisory Council on Vocational and Technical Education, WZ Knott Bldg., Tallahassee 32301, the state universities teacher education programs, and local school districts. Advisory committee members can often give some insight as to the quality of a program from a practitioner's viewpoint. Since they work closely with the school and are familiar with the local situation, ask them to help evaluate and critique courses.

2. Assess job placement and employer satisfaction. Keep records of all student placements and follow-up the students by surveying employers to assess employer satisfaction with the student's ability to perform the job. Utilize student and employer follow-up surveys.

3. Consult with industry personnel. Skills taught must meet the needs of the industry; therefore, direct input from industry will help keep the course materials current and appropriate. Utilize industry surveys and craft advisory committees.

4. Modify course content. Allow for adjustments in course content as technology changes. Out-of-date skills are of little value to the potential employer. Utilize resources such as V-TECS to establish current job competencies needed. The latest V-TECS Information is available through The Division of Vocational Education in Tallahassee, Florida.

5. Utilize faculty evaluations by administrators. Administrators and supervisors should observe and evaluate the instructors and the curriculum regularly and make constructive suggestions and recommendations for improvement. Conduct program reviews regularly.

6. Use alternative instructional methods. One method of teaching does not work for all programs or all instructors. Changing an approach, sequence, or technique may have a significant effect on instruction. Obtain information regarding alternative instructional methods and materials from:

Vocational Education Products
Division of Vocational Education
Florida Department of Education
Knott Building
Tallahassee, FL 32301

or

Instructional Materials Service
Department of Agricultural and Extension Education
101 Rolfs Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida 32611

7. Utilize indepth program evaluation. This evaluation should include both school and outside personnel. An indepth study and on-site visitation should be included. After the evaluation is made, written recommendations should be presented to school personnel. The presentation should also include means for accomplishing the recommendations. Program checklists for self-study and team evaluation by a committee of professionals in the field may be helpful. Forms for a comprehensive program review have been developed by the Divison of Vocational Education, the State Department of education and are available through the regional consultant for vocational education.

8. Replace an instructor. After a thorough study of the situation has been conducted and evidence indicates that the instructor is not performing at a satisfactory level, this strategy may be the last viable alternative. The instructor has too much influence on the program to overlook this option.

9. Utilize faculty evaluations by students. Students can give valuable input; therefore, use student evaluations to help the instructor improve the course. Faculty evaluation by students on machine-read forms may be utilized. Examples of these forms may be obtained from the teacher education programs in the state universities.

BARRIER 7
STUDENTS DO NOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM

Instructors expect students to come to class prepared to do the work required, to complete outside assignments and turn them in on time, perform laboratory activities efficiently, respect the rights of others in the class, and learn and work in a pleasant environment. Failure to do these things or failure to attend class regularly causes instructors and counselors to believe that the students are not meeting the commitments they made to the educational process. To help overcome these barriers, the following strategies are recommended.

1. Use individualized competency-based instruction. Competency-based instruction puts more responsibility on the student to perform. If students are sincere in their commitment to education then this type of instruction will allow them to achieve success at their own pace.

2. Emphasize work ethics in class. Discuss the responsibility of the job with the students and also what an employer expects of the employee. Relate real job responsibilities to the classroom and laboratory situations.

3. Provide counseling and guidance for the students. Students occasionally need to be reminded that their performance is not up to standard. Letting students know that someone is watching and cares may be the incentive they need.

4. Have students sign a statement indicating they understand program, class, and laboratory rules before beginning the program. This puts the student in a type of contractual agreement which helps them to remember their responsibilities to the educational process.

BARRIER 8
LACK OF STUDENT MOTIVATION

Highly motivated students create an atmosphere for more learning, more pleasant class conditions, and more effective teaching. Instructors must recognize the factors that cause students to want to achieve and provide as many of these factors as are available to

stimulate students. Recent research by Waltz et al (1984) revealed that 31 percent of the students who had completed one semester or more of their course of study indicated that motivation by the instructor had a moderate influence and 54 percent indicated that motivation by the instructor had a strong influence on their decision to continue in the program. Fifty-four percent of the respondents indicated that other incentives provided by the school had a moderate or strong effect on their decision to continue. The following strategies are recommended to help keep students motivated.

1. Relate theory and laboratory practice to job situations. Make sure that the students understand that what is being taught is what is needed on the job when they complete the course. Show them how to apply theory to the job.

2. Make sure students are getting what they came to get. Students take vocational training to learn skills that will enable them to get a job. Be sure that the skills being taught are what is needed on the job.

3. Make students feel they are part of the system. Establish a student advisory committee, utilize student evaluations of faculty, welcome students to the administrative center of the school, interact with students during class breaks, sponsor faculty/student outings or dinners, or other activities that enables students to get involved.

4. Encourage student participation in competitive contests. Recognize the students for their participation, sponsor off-campus trips for inter-school competition, hold multi-school competition at the school, seek sponsors to give cash awards and trophies and any other activities that would promote learning and encourage competition.

5. Sponsor student clubs. Clubs give students identity, develop leadership skills, promote cooperation and citizenship, and foster brotherhood.

6. Present awards, merit certificates, and other individual recognition. Make presentations at a group meeting and invite the news media to take pictures and get interviews with award winners. Students like to be recognized for their accomplishments. Positive reinforcements create positive attitudes.

7. Provide a challenging pace in the course of study. Instructors should be cognizant of the students' progress and adjust the presentation of materials accordingly.

8. Organize intramural sports and activities. This type of activity develops team spirit and friendship among the students. This often spills over to the classroom making the students feel more comfortable and relaxed.

9. Present scholarships recognizing achievement. Academic excellance is important in vocational training; therefore, recognition for outstanding classroom and laboratory performance will provide an incentive for some to work harder to achieve better grades.

BARRIER 9
INADEQUATE SECONDARY EDUCATION

Many students enrolled in vocational education programs lack the reading ability to comprehend the technical language used in vocational programs. They also lack the writing ability to communicate adequately and perform the basic mathematical skills necessary to meet the requirements of employment. Recent research by Waltz et al (1984), revealed that 58 percent of the students responding to a survey felt that the availability of special help at the school had a moderate or strong influence on their decision to continue their training program. The following strategies are recommended to help students with academic deficiencies:

1. Provide remedial instruction. Establish special classes or cooperate with the adult continuing education program in the school system to provide the help needed by students.

2. Provide individualized competency-based instruction. Development of skill sheets, audio-tutoral laboratories, video-tapes, and competency-based instructional material will allow students with problems to spend additional time with difficult portions of an instructional program. Also, employing laboratory assistants, technicians, or aids allows instructors to spend additional time with the students who need extra help.

3. Administer entrance and diagnostic examinations. By setting minimum entrance scores, students with severe deficiencies in reading, writing, or mathematical skills will be eliminated, and the need for special help within each program would be minimized. Counsel with the students who do not qualify to enter a training program and help them enroll in remedial classes offered by another school or program such as Adult Basic Education.

4. Encourage peer tutoring. Better students can reinforce their own learning by helping someone else to learn. Make peer tutoring a voluntary source of assistance so that the tutors' attitudes will be positive. Instructors should assist the tutors with teaching techniques and suggestions. Veterans benefits will assist qualified students by reimbursing for services of a tutor.

BARRIER 10
STUDENTS ACCEPT JOBS PRIOR TO PROGRAM COMPLETION

Instructors view this as a problem because the student is taken out of the formal training program before an adequate assessment of the student's skills has been made. The instructor cannot certify the student as competent in all the skills for which the program prepares students. However, the student is employed and is benefiting from his training. Other instructors do not view this as a problem, because they feel it is a good reflection on their program. When this is deemed to be a problem, the following strategies are recommended to assist in minimizing the detrimental effects and to keep the students enrolled in the program.

1. Apply work experience toward program completion requirements. Have the employer write a letter certifying the student's competencies in specific areas. Also, give the student take home or on the job type tests or exercises that will indicate that the student has received experience in specific areas.

2. Provide a supervised cooperative experience. Assist students in finding employers who will cooperate and allow the students to work part-time or full-time. Develop a well organized training plan agreed to by student and employer. Have written training plan and training agreement signed by employer, student, and teacher. Make periodic on the job visits and evaluate the student's progress. Also, have the employer evaluate the student's progress.

3. Maintain an open entry-open exit policy. Allow students to enroll at any time and continue enrollment until they are satisfied with the skills they have learned. This allows students to study and practice only those skills in which they are deficient. Also, students do not have to spend as much time in school.

4. Allow students to complete the course at night. When night classes are available the student can work during the day and still complete the requirements for the course. Program completion may be important to the student because a promotion or salary increase may be contingent upon his/her receiving a certificate of completion from the school.

BARRIER 11
STUDENTS ARE EASILY FRUSTRATED AND FEAR THEY WILL NOT DO WELL

Lack of self confidence is a major barrier for many students enrolled in postsecondary schools across the country. Frustration is common to all; however, frustrations caused by fear of not doing well in school is a concern with which educators must deal. Students' frustrations often come from a lack of fully understanding the

requirements of the program or from preconceived ideas about a program. Counselors and instructors must recognize these situations and make an effort to help the students. The following strategies are recommended to help students overcome frustrations and fears:

1. Encourage instructors to work more closely with the students. Instructors who interact with their students learn what the students are thinking and sense when something is wrong. Visit students at home and hold private conferences in an effort to communicate with the students. Praise good work and constructively critique unacceptable work.

2. Provide counseling and advising. Take time to listen to student concerns and offer constructive solutions. Arrange situations whereby counselors can interact with students on a casual basis. Earn students' confidence and respect.

3. Build in success early for students. The sooner students realize they can be successful the faster they become confident and comfortable in the program. Begin with simple skills and acknowledge all accomplishements.

4. Instructors refer students to counselors. If the instructor cannot or does not feel comfortable working with a particular student, then he should refer the student to the counselor who can provide professional assistance.

5. Provide a developmental program to help students meet their level of expectation. Build enough diversity in the program to accommodate all students. Individualized instruction and audio-tutorial laboratories help provide the special attention some students need.

BARRIER 12
STUDENTS TEMPORARILY POSTPONE PLANS TO ATTEND SCHOOL

Students drop out of school for a number of reasons. Among those reasons are such things as to work full-time, give birth or raise a child, or to get married. Many do so for only a short period of time and others drop out indefinitely. Many times if these students receive a follow-up phone call or letter, their interest can be rekindled and many re-enroll and complete their training programs. The following strategies are recommended for school personnel who are assisting students in overcoming this barrier.

1. Allow students to finish on a part-time basis. Establish a policy allowing part-time enrollment and develop schedules that would be compatible with student needs.

2. Require students to have an exit interview. This may be difficult when a student just quits attending class and never officially withdraws; however, when an established withdrawal procedure is followed it can be beneficial. Find out why the students are

withdrawing and what their future plans are. Also, get an address where then can be reached or the name of someone who will always know how to contact them. Establish a formal follow-up procedure and assign follow-up responsibilities to a counselor or other school personnel.

3. Allow students to test out of some areas of the course. If a student has had previous experience in a particular portion of a program allow them to take a test to prove knowledge of the subject. This may shorten the length of time needed to complete the course, therefore, encourage the students who remain enrolled. Thirty-five percent of the students surveyed in a recent study indicated that this practice had a moderate or strong influence on their decision to continue in a program (Waltz et al, 1984).

4. Allow re-entry at any time. This policy allows a student to re-enter without waiting a specified time period, such as a semester or school year. If the students change their minds, they are not barred from school because of an earlier mistake.

BARRIER 13
NEED FOR CHILD CARE

Many parents enroll in vocational training. Often they are single parents or have small children for whom they are responsible. According to Scanlon et al (1982), need for child care services ranked ninth among the situational barriers of dropouts and returnees. The availability of child care services may make the difference between whether the students take the time to go to school. When considering the modern day student population, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Provide a child care facility operated by the school. This allows parents to be close to small children while they are in school and also will save additional time needed in traveling to another day care service. With public support, only minimal fees would need to be charged.

2. Recommend private child care facilities in the area. Keep on hand a list of private child care facilities in the area and also name of individuals who provide child care in their homes. Do not become an agent for one, give all equal exposure.

3. Promote the development of a child care cooperative. Encourage students to trade services. Help students locate others who would be willing to trade time in caring for small children.

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